

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

January 26, 2004
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Marshall, Deputy Mayor Noble, and Councilmembers Balducci, Chelminiak, Davidson, Degginger, and Lee

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Noble opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and announced recess to Executive Session for approximately 45 minutes to discuss one item of labor negotiations and one item of potential litigation. Councilmember Balducci did not participate in discussion of the potential litigation item.

The Study Session resumed at 7:25 p.m. with Mayor Marshall presiding.

2. Oral Communications: None.

3. Study Session

(a) Council New Initiatives

Councilmember Degginger described complaints from citizens about their inability to reach and talk to a person at Bellevue District Court, which is operated through a contract with King County. He suggested sending a letter to the King County Council and the Presiding Judge of the District Court to request attention to this issue.

Responding to Mayor Marshall, Council indicated consensus to direct staff to draft a letter.

(b) 2003-2004 Human Services Needs Update

Parks and Community Services Director Patrick Foran introduced Human Services Commissioners in the audience: Chair Berta Seltzer, Past Chair Michelle Kline, Doug Hoople, and Irma Farsch.

Alex O'Reilly, Human Services Planner, explained that the 2003-2004 Human Services Needs Update will help guide the allocation of 2005-2006 Human Services Fund and Community Development Block Grant funding to provide services for Bellevue residents. The results of the needs update will guide the Human Services Commission in formulating its funding recommendations for Council and provide information for City departments, community groups, agencies, and regional planning efforts. The information reported in the needs update is gathered through surveys (phone, consumer, providers, faith organizations), focus groups (seniors, multicultural, low income, youth), key informant interviews, discussions with City staff, and reviews of relevant reports, studies, and web sites.

Ms. O'Reilly reviewed the major trends in human services needs over the next few years. High unemployment has caused some past volunteers and donors to now go to human services agencies for assistance. In the recent phone survey, 51 percent of respondents said unemployment was a major or moderate community problem, which contrasts with the 13.5 percent who responded in this way in 2001. Similarly, 16 percent of recent survey respondents said they could not find work to support their family compared to 9 percent in 2001. Residents in certain refugee and immigrant groups, those with disabilities, and less skilled workers have found it particularly difficult to find employment. Jobs with living wages and benefits were harder to find in 2003 compared to 2001/2002.

A second major trend is that more residents are now above age 65. The need for long-term care is growing, more family members are functioning as caregivers, and health care and prescription drug costs continue to increase. This is related to the third major trend, which is the lack of access to affordable health care and insurance.

Ms. O'Reilly noted the following additional key issues: 1) lack of affordable housing, 2) lack of low-cost legal aid, 3) transportation, 4) availability and affordability of child care, and 5) domestic violence. Bellevue Police reported a five percent increase in domestic violence incidents last year.

Ms. O'Reilly explained that human services providers are attempting to rebuild and preserve their infrastructure despite decreases in funding from all sources. Individual donor contributions have decreased and funding for prevention programs is threatened.

The Human Services Commission will discuss funding priorities over the next two months. A call for proposals from nonprofit agencies will be issued in the spring and proposals will be due in June. Recommendations for 2005-2006 funding will be presented to Council in late fall 2004.

Deputy Mayor Noble commented on Council's longstanding support of human services funding. He expressed concern about increasing needs and decreasing contributions and commended staff and the Human Services Commission on their efforts.

Mr. Lee encouraged a stronger emphasis on services offered by faith-based organizations. He acknowledged that a language barrier can affect a person's ability to get a job. He requested statistics on services provided and outcomes in terms of the number of people who got jobs. Mr. Lee questioned whether staff has identified any service areas that are not working properly.

Mr. Foran said staff will provide more details on English as a second language (ESL) programs to Council. He noted information in the 2003-2004 Human Services Needs Update regarding faith-based initiatives and programs. In terms of whether some programs are not working, Mr. Foran described Bellevue's outcomes-based evaluation tools which the Human Services Commission uses in evaluating proposals.

Responding to Mr. Degginger, Ms. O'Reilly said the main provider of low-cost (or no cost) legal aid for Bellevue residents is the Eastside Legal Assistance Program which offers legal clinics (e.g., for Spanish/Russian speakers and domestic violence victims), limited pro bono assistance, and additional education opportunities.

Mr. Chelminiak thanked Commission members for their work and attention to human services needs. He highlighted successes in teen pregnancy and youth violence prevention programs in particular.

Mayor Marshall encouraged activities to publicize faith-based services and to encourage such organizations to coordinate their efforts. Emily Leslie, Human Services Manager, noted the City's web site provides links to many community resources.

[Agenda Item (d) taken out of order.]

(d) Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) – Overview and Work Program

Planning Director Dan Stroh opened staff's presentation of the three-year update on the Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP).

Tim Stever, NEP Coordinator, reviewed the NEP objectives to facilitate communication, offer easy access to City Hall, provide a quick response to neighborhood priorities, identify and implement small capital projects, and help build a sense of community among neighbors. He displayed a map of Bellevue's 13 neighborhoods, which submitted a total of 2,100 NEP requests during 2001-2003 compared to 1,200 requests during 1998-2000. NEP's activities include small capital projects, the Neighborhood Match Program, immediate action items, and referral to other programs or agencies.

Mr. Stever reviewed the most common types of requests: pedestrian facilities (20 percent), traffic calming measures (12 percent), other traffic issues (8 percent), park improvements (5 percent), and aesthetic improvements (6 percent). NEP projects completed from 2001 to 2003 fall into the following categories: sidewalks (28 percent), park improvements (17 percent), school play areas (18 percent), traffic safety (6 percent), trails (9 percent), and other (22 percent). Traffic safety represented 14 percent and streetlights represented 12 percent of projects in the prior three-year cycle (1998-2000).

Mr. Stever highlighted the following NEP projects completed during the past three years:

- Main Street sidewalk near Wilburton Botanical Garden,

- Sidewalk on 108th Avenue NE in Northwest Bellevue,
- Woodridge Open Space Trail,
- Landscaping at Bellevue Way Post Office, and
- New play equipment at Phantom Lake Elementary.

The NEP has expanded neighborhood organization involvement and residents' participation in City projects. The City's web site provides an opportunity for online input regarding project implementation.

Mr. Stever explained that NEP's operating and administrative procedures were amended during the 2001-2003 cycle. The project limit was increased from \$100,000 to \$150,000, primarily to accommodate sidewalk projects. The following topics are now specifically addressed in the NEP procedures: streetlights, bus shelters, right-of-way landscaping, property acquisition, burying power lines, and planting strips. Requests for improvements to bus shelters are not handled by the NEP but requests are forwarded to METRO. Property acquisition is not addressed through the NEP, and requests regarding power lines are forwarded to Puget Sound Energy. Requests for landscaping and planting strips have been completed in conjunction with sidewalk projects. However, landscaping is generally a separate line item for voting on residents' ballots.

Mr. Stever said the NEP public notification procedure has been amended to avoid building controversial and divisive projects. Individuals previously had veto power over projects, and 41 percent of the proposed sidewalk projects have been vetoed. The new procedure makes it more difficult to veto a project. If a minimum of 75 percent of residents along a proposed sidewalk project approve of the sidewalk, it will be presented for vote through a NEP ballot. Mr. Stever said the Transportation Department is working to develop written procedures governing the NEP ballot process. A section on funding procedures has been added to clarify that: 1) funds allocated are based on the number of households in each area, and 2) funding stays within an area and may carry forward to the next three-year cycle.

Councilmember Degginger said Council would like to review the written voting procedures once they are drafted by staff.

Dr. Davidson feels the NEP is an exciting program but does not want the planning and voting process to become divisive for neighborhoods.

Responding to Ms. Balducci, Ms. Stever said staff works hard toward achieving 100 percent participation by residents in determining whether to move forward with a particular project.

Mr. Chelminiak thanked staff for a NEP project in his neighborhood approximately two years ago. Responding to Mr. Chelminiak, Mr. Stever acknowledged the need to clarify the rules on voter eligibility because they currently refer to allowing home/property owners to vote. However, multifamily units are treated as separate households and are sent ballots.

Deputy Mayor Noble commented on a recent letter to Council from the 108th Avenue SE Neighborhood Association about the Neighborhood Enhancement Program. The letter suggested a proposed NEP project was inappropriate because it would be used by citywide residents and

not just adjacent neighbors. Mr. Noble opined that the same argument could be made for most or all NEP projects. The letter further suggested that sidewalks should be covered from a separate funding source because they are so expensive to construct. Mr. Noble feels this represents a tradeoff for neighborhoods to weigh in their decisions regarding NEP projects.

Mayor Marshall thanked staff for their NEP work and for providing projects that help residents feel good about their neighborhoods.

(c) Regional Issues

Diane Carlson, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, described a proposed interlocal agreement between cities in King County to manage the King County and Yakima County jail contracts. The interlocal agreement creates: 1) an assembly of elected officials from each participating city, 2) a Jail Administrative Group (JAG), and 3) a Jail Operations Group (JOG). Staff requested Council direction to prepare the final approval documents for Council consideration of the jail administration interlocal agreement.

Councilmember Lee expressed concern the agreement will lead to the hiring of staff. Ms. Carlson noted the City of Renton has provided considerable staff time in developing the agreement. Hiring staff to oversee the interlocal agreement would require the approval of the assembly of elected officials.

Ms. Balducci noted the aggressive schedule on page 9 of the Regional Issues packet and encouraged support of the interlocal agreement in order to move forward with planning for future jail services.

Mayor Marshall said Councilmember Degginger has agreed to serve on the assembly of elected officials. City Manager Steve Sarkozy said staff will return for Council action on the interlocal agreement at the next meeting. Councilmember Lee requested additional information on the proposed staff position.

Moving on, Ms. Carlson and Mike Doubleday, lobbyist, provided the state legislative update. Mr. Doubleday said the Senate Economic Development Committee held a hearing on SB 5364 (the EDGE bill) on January 20. The bill should move to the Senate floor this week. A tort reform bill (SB 6520) has been introduced in the Senate. The House has introduced two separate bills (HB 2485 and HB 2486) addressing individual components of the tort reform package.

Ms. Carlson noted the City's work with the City of Seattle and Puget Sound Energy to develop legislation regarding the release of sensitive information related to critical infrastructure. Mr. Doubleday said City staff and lobbyists are working with a coalition of cities in support of HB 2327 to clarify local government's responsibility to provide access to retiree health care.

Ms. Carlson explained the State's pursuit of sales tax streamlining as part of a coalition of 38 states that have enacted a uniform system to encourage Internet sellers to voluntarily collect sales tax and forward revenue to their state's government. The current projected loss from remote Internet sales is \$308 million for Washington state and \$91 million for local governments. The

Department of Revenue estimates Bellevue's loss at \$1.4 million annually. Ms. Carlson noted seven options to mitigate revenue losses beginning on page 12 of the Regional Issues packet, as a starting point for discussion and feedback to the legislature.

Ms. Carlson reported that the House Committee on Technology, Telecommunications and Energy approved HB 2340 on January 22, which would allow energy providers to choose to utilize the Energy Facilities Siting Evaluation Committee (EFSEC) process for approval of renovation, reconstruction, construction, and siting of transmission lines and related facilities. This legislation would have the effect of preempting local government processes and possibly local government franchises with energy companies.

Mr. Degginger expressed concern about HB 2340's potential for undermining local government authority. Mr. Doubleday will provide more details on the bill in the near future.

Ms. Balducci expressed support for HB 2316 to protect personal information about judicial and law enforcement personnel and corrections officers from public disclosure.

Turning to the federal legislative update, Ms. Carlson said the TEA-21 reauthorization bill is HR 3550 which is known as TEA-LU (Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users). She requested Council approval of a letter to Congressman Rick Larsen expressing support for essential components of the TEA-LU bill [Letter provided on page 61 of the Regional Issues packet]. Mayor Marshall indicated Council consensus to send the letter and to copy Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray as well.

Kim Becklund, Transportation Policy Advisor, distributed a briefing on Sound Transit. The Sound Transit Finance Committee voted on January 22 to begin development of the Phase II Plan. Key components of the plan are high-capacity transit, HOV/carpool/vanpool initiatives, regional bus services, and related investments.

(e) Downtown Parking

Transportation Director Goran Sparrman opened discussion regarding the two major downtown parking issues: 1) off-street "Park Once" concept, and 2) on-street parking enforcement. There are approximately 28,764 parking spaces in downtown Bellevue. The majority of this is off-street parking and one percent (345 spaces) is on-street parking. The number of parking spaces in 2020 is projected at 39,696. Approximately half of the downtown parking supply functions as commuter parking and the other half is visitor parking. In 2002, the evening peak average parking occupancy was 60 percent. Peak average parking occupancy is estimated at 68 percent in 2020, with the highest utilization at Bellevue Square. This indicates an adequate supply of parking in the downtown.

Kevin O'Neill, Strategic Planning Manager, provided an update on the Park Once initiative. The concept emerged as a recommendation of the Downtown Implementation Plan Update last year and refers to an emphasis on:

- Providing short-term visitor parking,

- Providing customers with more flexibility and making downtown more customer-friendly,
- Reducing automobile trips within downtown,
- Increasing pedestrian volumes, and
- Utilizing the parking supply more efficiently.

Mr. O'Neill explained that research of the Park Once strategy included a survey of 400 respondents and the work of two focus groups. Participants were surveyed in Northwest Village, Pedestrian Corridor/Galleria area, and Old Bellevue. Of the respondents, 80 percent parked in visitor parking and 30 percent worked in the downtown. In terms of residence, 13 percent lived downtown, 21 percent lived elsewhere in Bellevue, 14 percent were from Seattle, and others were from neighboring cities. 77 percent of respondents said half or more of their trips involve more than one destination. 94 percent commonly use free customer parking and 47 percent use street parking, despite the fact that it represents a small percentage of the parking supply.

Continuing with the study results, Mr. O'Neill said 46 percent of respondents said they sometimes parked in a lot designated for one store but walked to a nearby store as well. 41 percent agreed it is easy to get around Bellevue by car, and 43 percent agreed they can find available parking to suit their needs. 64 percent agreed it is easy for pedestrians to get around downtown Bellevue. In terms of parking preferences, 28 percent agreed that paying a small fee for parking would be worth the convenience of not having to drive between downtown destinations. 55 percent said they would rather walk between downtown destinations. 83 percent prefer the convenience of parking directly in front of a downtown destination.

Focusing on the Park Once concept specifically, 52 percent said they would be likely to use Park Once while 26 percent said they would not likely use it. Only 17 percent are likely to use Park Once at a cost of \$5 for 2 to 3 hours, 46 percent are likely to use a lot for \$1 per hour, and 82 percent are likely to use a lot with free parking by store validation. 41 percent are likely to use a lot with a 10-minute walk, 66 percent are likely to use a lot with a five-minute walk, 33 percent are likely to use the Park Once lot if it is raining, and 37 percent are likely to use it if there is a free bus from the parking area.

Mr. O'Neill said the two focus groups represented frequent and less frequent visitors to downtown. The frequent visitors were more familiar with getting around downtown and acknowledged that they moved their cars between downtown destinations. The infrequent visitors were less familiar with downtown locations, except for Bellevue Square, and were more likely to visit only one or two destinations and to drive between destinations. Both groups generally did not have trouble finding parking, expressed frustration with parking enforcement, and admitted "cheating" (parking in one lot and walking to another business). Focus group members talked about how spread out downtown Bellevue is, which lowers the appeal for walking. They noted how Bellevue is a cross between urban and suburban.

Both focus groups were amenable to the Park Once concept but the frequent visitor group was more enthusiastic than the infrequent visitors. Both groups felt parking should be free. However, members of the frequent visitor group were more willing to pay for Park Once parking, and neither group saw additional on-street parking as part of a Park Once solution. The

participants noted that their willingness to use a Park Once lot would also be influenced by cost, store validation, number of destinations they planned to visit, whether they were traveling with children, what or how much they were carrying, the availability of a downtown circulator (bus or trolley), and the ease of getting in and out of the parking facility.

Mr. O'Neill said if the City proceeds with the Park Once idea it will be important to pay attention to details, clarify the Park Once concept and the City's role in downtown parking, and continue discussions with Bellevue Downtown Association, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, and downtown stakeholders.

Councilmember Degginger feels the information does not provide any clear guidance on where to go next.

Mark Poch, Traffic Engineering Manager, reviewed the City's current on-street parking program. The program started in 1996 with the objective of providing free, short-term parking as well as regular and effective enforcement. By 1999, it was clear that on-street parking was being heavily used by commuters which meant the spaces were not available for customers of businesses. In 2000, a "park only once per day on each street" rule was adopted with a new parking fine schedule. Diamond Parking provides enforcement for the City, and a warning system was implemented. Under the current program, on-street parking by downtown workers has decreased since 2000 and the majority of parking areas have 50 to 90 percent occupancy. In a typical month there are 250 warnings, 185 overtime parking violations, and 350 other violations. The net cost of the enforcement program in 2003 was \$53,000. Diamond is paid a flat annual fee regardless of the number of tickets issued.

Mr. Poch said the typical complaint is not about the "park only once per day on each street" rule but usually a person saying he or she did not exceed the two-hour limit or was cited for parking slightly over a line or beyond a sign. The City asks Diamond to use its best judgment, and Diamond measures and records distances if a violation is related to some type of boundary/zone.

Dr. Davidson noted numerous complaints by citizens who were ticketed for parking within five feet of a curb/driveway cut. Mr. Poch said the City plans to enhance its signage regarding parking near fire hydrants and similar restrictions.

Mr. Poch described a survey conducted in November 2003 targeted at businesses with adjacent on-street parking. Surveys were hand delivered to 98 businesses and the response rate was 30 percent. Of the respondents, 43 percent said the current program is working for them, 73 percent agreed with the program's objectives, 43 percent expressed support for the rule to park only once per day on each street, and 39 were in favor of eliminating this rule.

Mr. Poch outlined the following alternatives for on-street parking:

1. Do nothing.
2. Modify the rule to park only once per day on each street.
 - a. Form parking zones.
 - b. Mark individual spaces.

- c. Allow AM and PM parking on same street.
- d. Eliminate the rule.
- 3. Implement pay parking. Revenue is estimated conservatively at \$120,000 annually. Mr. Poch said further study is needed if Council is interested in this option.
- 4. Trial Parking Management Area – Select a subarea of the downtown and form a parking committee to set rules and costs.

Staff recommends continuing with the current strategy because it is meeting the objective of ensuring adequate parking for business patrons. Mr. Poch feels Alternative 2(c) could be worth a try if Council is interested in that option.

➡ At 9:59 p.m., Deputy Mayor Noble moved to extend the meeting to 10:15 p.m. Mayor Marshall seconded the motion.

➡ The motion to extend the meeting to 10:15 p.m. carried by a vote of 7-0.

Dr. Davidson suggested eliminating on-street parking on 106th Avenue downtown. He feels a zone approach could be useful in Old Bellevue.

Ms. Balducci recommended providing additional notice to drivers about the rule to not park more than once per day on any given street. Mrs. Marshall and Mr. Noble concurred.

Mr. Sparrman noted it might become necessary to implement parking meters at some point, which is common in most urban centers.

Dr. Davidson suggested painting lines to clearly define legal parking spaces.

At 10:12 p.m., Mayor Marshall declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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